

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 299659 TOSEC 320134

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 299659 TOSEC 320134

NODIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CARACAS 14347 ACTION SECSTATE DTD 09 DEC 76.

QTE: S E C R E T CARACAS 14347

NODIS

FOR ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, VE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH IRIBARREN

REF: STATE 299311

1. IN ITS FRONT PAGE FEATURE STORY, EL NACIONAL OF
DECEMBER 8 CARRIED A WASHINGTON DATELINED UPI STORY OF REF MEETING
UNDER THE HEADLINE: "FORD ASKS VENEZUELA TO CONSIDER EFFECTS
OF ANOTHER OIL PRICE INCREASE". THE STORY STATES THAT
PRESIDENT FORD MADE THIS APPEAL IN A PRIVATE MEETING
WITH IRIBARREN. THE STORY SAYS THE 45-MINUTE
MEETING TOOK PLACE THE DAY AFTER IRIBARREN'S PRESENTATION
OF CREDENTIALS. IRIBARREN CONFIRMED TO UPI THE FACT
OF THE MEETING BUT ACCORDING TO THE STORY DID NOT
INDICATE ITS SUBSTANCE. THE SUBSTANCE, HOWEVER,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 299659 TOSEC 320134

WAS CONFIRMED, THE STORY GOES ON, BY "OTHER

VENEZUELAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES".

2. THIS MORNING'S EL NACIONAL, IN THE SAME FRONT PAGE FEATURE SPOT, REPORTS THE GOV REACTION AND QUOTES MINISTER OF MINES HERNANDEZ EXTENSIVELY. THE SENSE OF THE STORY IS THAT ALTHOUGH VENEZUELA UNDERSTANDS WASHINGTON'S CONCERN, VENEZUELA'S POSITION AND OPEC'S THAT A PRICE INCREASE IS NECESSARY REMAINS FIRM AND "IRREVERSIBLE". THE MINISTER, QUOTED AS SAYING HE KNEW ABOUT PRESIDENT'S FORD'S REPRESENTATIONS, WENT ON TO SAY THAT VENEZUELA REALIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE BUT ADDED THAT OPEC COUNTRIES HAD TO PROTECT THEIR PURCHASING POWER. FOR THAT REASON HERNANDEZ IS QUOTED AS SAYING VENEZUELA WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO FIND GLOBAL SOLUTIONS IN THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE IN PARIS. "THERE EXIST SUFFICIENTLY POWERFUL ELEMENTS IN THE WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION", HERNANDEZ SAID, TO OBLIGE US TO ADJUST OPEC'S PRICES. THERE IS TOTAL CONSENSUS TO THIS EFFECT IN OPEC."

3. ESCOBAR DID NOT REFER TO THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING. NEITHER DID I.

4. PLEASE NOTE THAT AT LEAST HERE THE FACT OF THE MEETING AND ITS BASIC CONTENT AS DESCRIBED IN REFTEL ARE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED FOR CONFIRMATION, I ASSUME BECAUSE NO ONE HERE FEELS ANY NEED NOW TO HAVE THE FACT CONFIRMED. IN VIEW OF ALL THIS, I AM A LITTLE PUZZLED AT THE SECRECY WITH WHICH REFTEL SHROUDS THE FACT OF THE MEETING. DO YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER GUIDANCE IN THIS REGARD?
VAKY
UNQTE: ROBINSON

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NNN

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